EDUCATION U.S.A.

A Special Weekly Report on Educational Affairs

Dateline: Washington, D.C.
November 10, 1960

WEST COAST CITIZENS MAP THEIR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Lay citizen studies of public education have rolled up and down two West Coast states during the past two years. The results are now out in California and Washington--significant reports, sponsored by the state legislatures, involving thousands of persons and ideas and mapping a realistic future for the states' schools.

The report of the Interim Committee on Education of the Washington state legislature is "the most thorough official analysis by lay citizens ever undertaken." It was headed by James Nickerson, on leave from Montana State College.

California's report is a citizens' directive to all agencies dealing with education--the legislature, the state board of education, and local school boards. Submitted last week to a joint interim committee on education of the legislature, it was headed by William Lawlor of Glendale.

Significantly, citizens in both states were working on much the same problems in their goal to improve education for all levels.

● The Teacher. To recruit top quality teachers, the reports emphasize adequate salaries. Washington recommends a beginning salary of $5000 and a top salary of $10,000. California suggests that salaries "be set at a high enough level to attract and hold the best talent in the profession." Its report encourages merit pay studies.

A controversial recommendation of the California study is to reduce the number of education courses offered in the state colleges. It proposes that all teacher candidates be required to take a year of postgraduate, paid internship. Washington's approach to teacher education is to "increase the intellectual content of some of the teacher education courses." Both reports advocate developing discipline codes for the classroom, fewer classroom interruptions, and teacher aides.

● Instruction. The California report details its recommendations on curriculum: a minimum of two-thirds of the elementary-school week devoted to basic skills, subject grouping, an elementary class size of 25 pupils, elimination of integrated English and social studies courses, minimizing physical education requirements (PE would become an elective in grades 11 and 12), deleting the state code reference to driver training, and, another controversial subject, state-wide testing.

To improve instruction, Washington makes a unique recommendation--to establish a state Educational Research and Information Center. This would make grants to districts and individuals for research work. It would conduct a broad information program and maintain a field service to demonstrate new media and disseminate results of studies.

● Other important steps. Washington advocates that all elementary-school districts be eliminated by 1963 and that there be partial state support for summer schools; California wants textbook selections to be made in public; economies to be made in administrative salaries, school building luxuries, and trivial courses; and a legislative study of the possibilities of a year-round school.

Published by the National School Public Relations Association, a department of the National Education Association.

The question of Bible reading and other religious practices in public schools is coming to the fore again in several states. Maryland's attorney general, acting in a test case which arose in Baltimore, upheld constitutionality of a 55-year-old law requiring daily Bible readings or recital of the Lord's Prayer, but ruled that objectors could be excused for these periods. A decision on constitutionality of a similar Pennsylvania law was put off by the U.S. Supreme Court because, while the case was pending, the law was amended to provide that objectors could be excused from participation. In Florida, religious practices in Miami schools, including Bible reading and Christmas and Easter programs, are under attack in the state circuit court. Meanwhile, a team of distinguished Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish scholars is working on a new edition of the Bible intended to be acceptable to each of these faiths as a "common Bible" for public schools. States generally prohibit sectarian practices in the schools. No state prohibits Bible reading; some states require or specifically authorize it. Usually courts have sustained the practice if provision is made for excusing pupils who object.

▶ Reversing a previous stand, the presidents of the six state universities in Illinois have agreed to confer mutually on budget matters. The action eventually may end interuniversity competition for $100 million of public funds, which up to now have been subjected to a constant, regional battle in the legislature. Influencing their decision may have been plans, released yesterday by the state commission of higher education, for consolidating the administration of all six schools.

▶ In two years' time the ratio of guidance counselors to pupils has been reduced from one for every 750 pupils to one for 600 pupils, under National Defense Education Act funds. This report was made last week at a meeting of state guidance counselors at Kansas City. Also reported: at least 75 percent of all high-school students have been tested as to aptitude and ability. More than half of the counselors indicated that they want the NDEA counseling services extended to elementary schools.

▶ The federal government should be a "patron" of higher education, as well as a "customer," offering grants and contracts for specific services and projects. This is one of the conclusions reached at the St. Louis University regional meeting of the American Assembly. Participants from 13 states included representatives of business, labor, the professions, government, and education. Their statement urged federal support for higher education on a unified, coherent basis, emphasizing matching grants for construction. Federal support should be extended to academic areas, it was urged, and there should be agencies for social sciences and humanities similar to the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

▶ The Census Bureau has found 7,000 school systems in the country operating without any classrooms, existing solely for local tax levying purposes. Further, nearly one-third of the nation's school districts provide schools for less than 50 pupils. Only one out of three enrolls 300 or more students. But there has been progress in reorganization--a reduction of 10,000 school districts since 1957.

▶ What does a principal do about the current fad for short skirts and the continuing fad for other short and tight student dress? The Secondary Principals' Association of Anne Arundel County (Annapolis), Md., received permission from the county board of education to develop a code on dress standards, with faculty, students, and parents participating. The code will be based upon neatness, good taste, and economy, and the principals will be empowered to make "emergency changes as deemed necessary."

▶ Residents in Arizona's largest school district, Tucson District 1, will soon vote on extending schools to a year-round basis. A lay committee has unanimously recommended the 12-month school, pointing out that it would eliminate the double or extended day sessions now affecting almost 6,000 children in the district. This year, 19,500 Arizona school children are on double or extended sessions.

EDUCATION SCOPE

PREVIEWS OF NATIONAL MAGAZINES, TV, RADIO, AND PRESS REPORTS

Dateline: New York, N.Y.
November 10, 1960

A Generation of Voters

How schools can help save our large urban areas is an interesting sidelight on a Nov. 21 CBS telecast, "Big City--1980" (part of the new science series, "Tomorrow"). Through Brazilia and Philadelphia, the program shows how technology and planning can create a new, better metropolis, or save an old one from blight. But public understanding is vital, and that's where schools come in. Edward Bacon, Philadelphia Planning Commission head, says proudly, "We raise our public support, as we rear our children." While the camera shows a class scene, he explains that concepts of city planning are taught in the city system even on the elementary level. When they reach voting age, Philadelphians will know the importance of a referendum or bond issue. In contrast to another recent TV report about local-election apathy, this program reveals how schools can actively strengthen their community through citizenship education...a good reason to recommend it to civic opinion-leaders.

(Monday, Nov. 21, 9:30-10:30 p.m. E.S.T., CBS-TV)

Dobie and the Drop-Out

A zany telecomedy, not noted for its respectful attitude toward education, comes up with a pleasant surprise next week. On the "Dobie Gillis" show, an unhappy student named Paul is deliberately flunking out, on the verge of quitting school. His English teacher enlists wisecracking Dobie to dissuade the boy. A glimpse of Paul's squalid home situation dismays Gillis; he launches a campaign to improve his classmate's lot and his outlook, and keeps him in school. A happy ending and a sympathetic approach, on a program with a large and loyal teen-age audience.

(Tuesday, Nov. 15, 8:30-9 p.m., E.S.T., CBS-TV)

Feast of Features

Another hearty helping of school commentary is offered next week in the Saturday Review's third monthly Education Supplement. The fare is so varied that all we can do is give you an advance look at the menu. . .

"Challenge and Change"--guest editorial by Lester Nelson, treasurer of the Fund for the Advancement of Education
"Education, the Long View"--by Arnold J. Toynbee
"The Intellectual Girl"--by Ethel Strainchamps, a Midwestern housewife
"Why Not a 12-Month College?"--by Weimer K. Hicks, Kalamazoo College president
"Teachers' Salaries Then and Now"--by Sidney Tickton
"College Presidents Speak"--quotations of speeches by three presidents
Book Review--Diary of a Russian School Teacher

(Nov. 19 Saturday Review, on sale Nov. 15)

AEW Finale

The last word on American Education Week, don't forget, is the endearing tribute to a teacher on Saturday's "Leave It to Beaver" TV show. Title: "Miss Lander's Fiance." (Saturday, Nov. 12, 8:30-9 p.m., E.S.T., ABC-TV)

Published by the National School Public Relations Association, a department of the National Education Association.

"A Desk for Billie" Reprise

Food for thought the day after the Thanksgiving feast is scheduled by "CBS Reports" with a program, "Harvest of Shame" about migrant workers. Edward R. Murrow reports on their plight, interviewing, among others, Mrs. Christine Schack of Cranbury, N.J., teacher in a school for migrant children there.

(Friday, Nov. 25, 9:30-10:30 p.m. E.S.T., CBS-TV)

Eenie, Meeny, Minie, Mo

The pick-and-choose dilemma of highly selective colleges gets another run-through in the current issue of the Saturday Evening Post. Edward T. Chamberlain, Jr., admissions director at Dartmouth, writes "Why We Turn Them Down," to explain why many applicants with good academic records don't make it through the admissions mill. (Nov. 12 Saturday Evening Post, on sale now)

For the PTA—3 R's, JD, and TV

Three topics of top interest (the three R's, juvenile delinquency, classroom television) are subjects for articles in this month's National Parent-Teacher.

"Spurring Their Progress in School"--Robert Goldenson

With parents' insight and foresight, school work and home activities can add up to a better education. With this premise, the author, an ex-teacher, shows parents how to become guides instead of gadflies. His wise tip on attitude: "If you are interested but not anxious, if you are ready to accept guidance, if there are no overtones or undertones of dissatisfaction with the school, your help will probably be welcomed."

"What's the Score on Juvenile Delinquency"--William Kvaraceus

The director of last year's NEA project on JD here tells parents what may startle them...that many approaches to the problem are misdirected and ineffective. Those who haven't read his two-part report will find many surprises and ideas, valuable for group rethinking of anti-JD work.

"The Promise of Classroom Television"--John L. Burns

The president of the Radio Corporation of America sizes up progress and prospects of ETV succinctly in an article, also available in the current Reader's Digest.

(November National Parent-Teacher)

The Impresarios of the PTA

Exciting cultural enrichment of elementary-school learning is possible for an imaginative PTA, says Hilda Meltzer in Parent's. "Bringing the Living Arts to School" tells how a special committee in Ossining, N.Y., rounded up artists, musicians, dancers, craftsmen, etc. for year-long assemblies, at an average cost of 4¢ per child per program! Particularly praiseworthy is the way the parent group worked fully with teachers to co-ordinate the special programs with the curriculum. Mrs. Meltzer gives a common-sense check list of steps to take...responsibility, financing, etc. Careful following of Ossining guideposts could produce a really meaningful cultural dividend. (December Parent's, on sale in two weeks)

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Staff: Roy K. Wilson, *Editorial Director;* Janet Kroll, *Managing Editor;* Myrtle Bonn; Helen H. Cox; Beatrice M. Gudridge; Dee Preusch; Mildred S. Wainger.

Evart W. Ardis, director, Bureau of Appointments and Occupational Infor-

▶ The first big blow-up over integration in the 1960-61 school year may come next week at New Orleans, La., where the schools are under federal court order to begin integration on Monday. A special session of the Louisiana legislature considered 28 bills designed to block integration. One authorizes the legislature to take control of the New Orleans schools, thus injecting state sovereignty between the federal government and the people. In Prince Edward County, Va., where schools have been closed over a desegregation order since 1959, ground was broken this week for a privately financed white high school. Negro children in the county now have no formal education facilities.

▶ New York City teachers went on strike Monday for the first time in the city's history in a strike called by the United Federation of Teachers, which claims to represent 10,000 of the city's 38,900 classroom teachers. The majority of teachers in the city belong to non-union organizations. The board of education reported 3,650 teachers, above normal Monday absences, stayed home or picketed outside their schools. School officials pressed nonteacher personnel into classroom service. Student absenteeism was up 1 percent beyond a normal Monday. Strikers are seeking recognition for collective bargaining and other benefits, some of which are at odds with non-union teacher groups.

THE MAGIC NUMBER IS 4

This is a growing country. Its growth creates problems and opportunities.

Walter Heller, chairman of the department of economics at the University of Minnesota, discussed this subject and its implications for education at an NEA conference on salary scheduling in Washington. Walter Lippmann also brought it up in a recent Saturday Evening Post article.

They, and other political philosophers, seem to have settled on the proposition that the country can and should grow economically at the rate of at least 4 percent a year. Lately, it has been 2½ percent. The Democratic platform calls for growth at 5 percent; the Rockefeller report suggested 5 to 6 percent as attainable.

Heller's position: Within the 1960's the Gross National Product (GNP)--the total of goods and services produced--is going to jump from the present rate of $500 billion a year to $750 billion. This means that many families will be passing from the stage at which they spend all of their money for necessities to a stage at which they will have a considerable amount of "discretionary income" to be spent as they choose.

Estimating that the "discretionary income" will amount to $135 billion a year by the end of the decade, Heller said that the figures "underscore a truth that is central to future educational finances; the basic, economic capacity to do the job is not only adequate, but ample." The great majority of American families, he said, will be in income brackets where "adequate tax contributions for schools will be limited less by their capacity to pay than by their will to pay." He also pointed out that a substandard education dwarfs any other cause of poverty.

He concluded that the whole question of economic growth can become synonymous with social welfare, if investment is made in human beings--in their education, training, health, and well-being.

Lippmann believes the country can and should grow economically at the rate of 4 percent a year, or a little more, provided we have "the brains and determination."

"No one, I think, would seriously contend that we should give up public schools and public universities," Lippmann wrote. "And if public education is not very good, if classrooms are overcrowded, if there are not enough teachers and if they are poorly paid, the generation of children involved can never make up what it has lost."

Evart W. Ardis, director, Bureau of Appointments and Occupational Information, Univ. of Michigan; Alfred W. Beattie, superintendent, Allegheny County schools, Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Irby B. Carruth, superintendent of schools, Austin, Texas, have been nominated in the primary ballot for president-elect, American Assn. of School Administrators. ›› Paul H. Lahann, director, Bureau of Teacher Personnel, Chicago public schools, is the new president, and Ernest W. Cabe, Jr., director of personnel, public schools, Austin, Texas, is the new president-elect of the American Assn. of School Personnel Administrators, following the recent conference in Miami Beach, where the association's 1960 report of evaluative criteria for local school system use, Standards for School Personnel Administration, was presented. ›› W. T. Woodson, superintendent of schools, Fairfax County, Va., plans to resign next June 30. ›› John Joseph Meng, at his inauguration as president of Hunter College last week, called for a "more positive" approach and scholarly agreement on teaching ethical and moral values, but added: "We must understand where teaching ends and indoctrination begins; the dividing line between the two must never be crossed." ›› Fred P. McGinnis, formerly superintendent of the Alaska Methodist Mission, is president of the new Alaska Methodist Univ., Anchorage, the first private, four-year institution of higher learning in the new state, enrolling 150 students in its first year. ›› Asst. Supt. A. B. Harvey, has been designated superintendent of schools, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, succeeding O. E. Hill, who died Nov. 3.

▶ The Rockefeller Brothers Fund is preparing a 400-page book, Prospect for America, to be published March 17 by Doubleday, containing all six reports made by the Rockefeller Special Studies Panel since 1957, including the widely distributed report on education, "The Pursuit of Excellence." The other five concern U.S. foreign policy; international security--the military aspect; U.S. international economic policy; the U.S. economy; and American democracy.

▶ Public schools in two American cities are sharing pride with the Univ. of California this week in connection with the Nobel Prizes in science. Willard F. Libby, 51, professor at UCLA, who received the 1960 Chemistry Prize for developing a method of using radioactive carbon for age determination in archaeology, geology, geophysics, and other science, attended Analy Union High School, Sebastopol, Calif., 1922-26. His chemistry teacher John Crump is still teaching there. Donald A. Glaser, 34, professor at UC, Berkeley, who was awarded the 1960 Physics Prize for having invented the bubble chamber, a device for studying subatomic particles by making their paths visible with bubbles, attended Cleveland Heights (Ohio) High School, 1940-43, and was taught there by the late Carl C. Dewald, physics teacher. The winners were selected by the Royal Swedish Academy of Science, acting under the terms of the will of Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite. Each prize amounts to the equivalent of more than $43,700.

▶ J. W. Gregory, Univ. of Kentucky, has been appointed executive director of a depth study of the common school system in Kentucky, to be completed within 11 months, covering, primarily: (1) the effect of partisan politics in school administration at the district level; (2) the quality and efficiency of teacher education at the state colleges, Univ. of Kentucky, and 15 private colleges; (3) the proficiency of classroom teachers, workings of the tenure law, desirability of merit as a salary factor, qualifications in subject matter taught. Five secondary areas are to be covered also.

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Staff: Roy K. Wilson, *Editorial Director;* Myrtle Bonn; Helen H. Cox; Beatrice M. Gudridge; Joseph Hanlon; Anne Lewis; Jack T. Parker; Dee Preusch; Mildred S. Wainger.

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Correspondence: Address all editorial and subscription correspondence to the National School Public Relations Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.